The Center of Your World

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The Center of Your World

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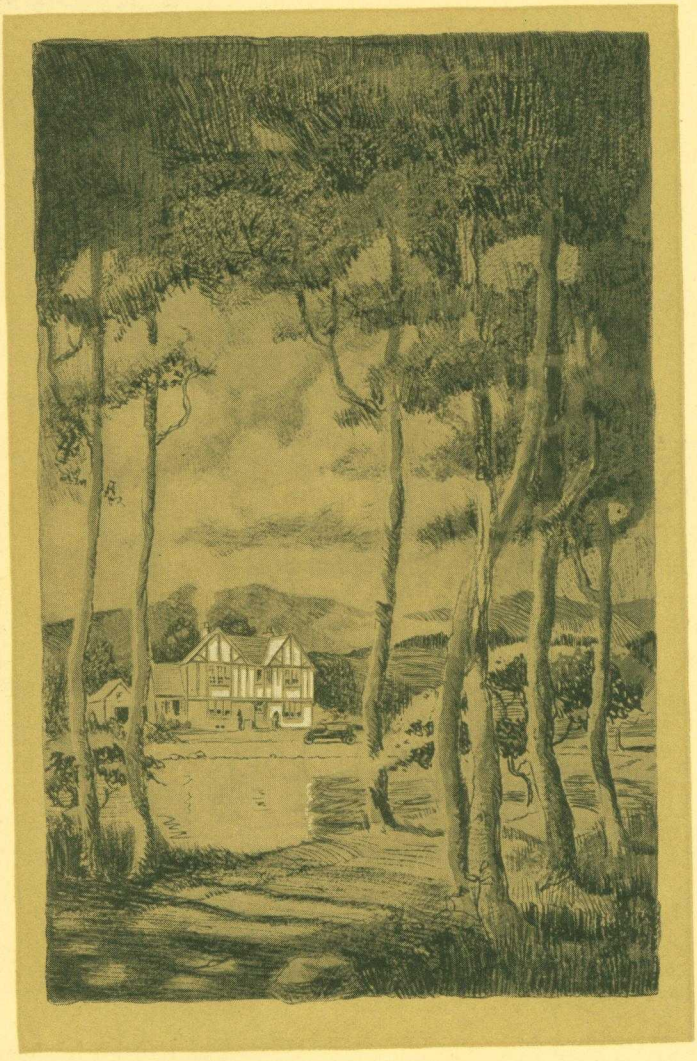


Home, in one form or another, is the great object of life
—Titcomb

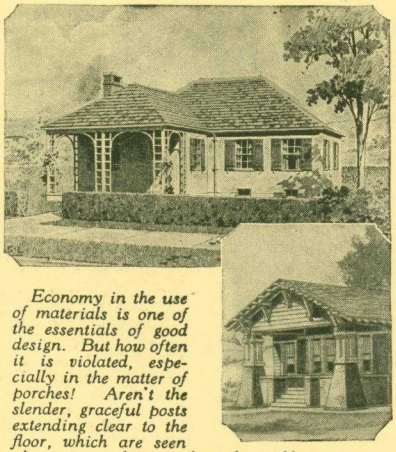
The Center of Your World

IT has been said that there is no single house among all the millions that have been built that has not seemed to someone at some time the heart of all things and the end of all travel. *Your* home, too, will stand as the center of the world.

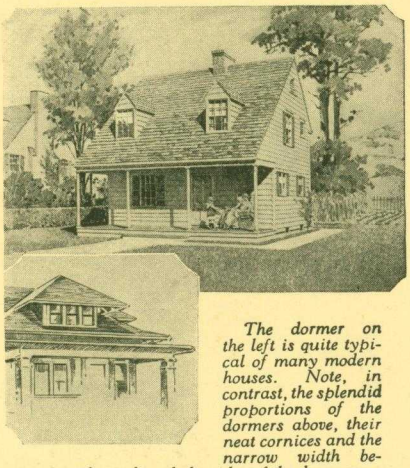
The portfolio, "Better Built Homes," should be of much help to you in finding a plan for that home that will have a comfortable layout and a convenient arrangement. The plan must, of course, come first. With your decision on it made, you are then in a position to give thought to the beauty or design of your house.

"I dare say," writes Mr. Frederick L. Ackerman, A. I. A., of Trowbridge & Ackerman, Architects, New York City, and formerly Chief of Design of the Housing Bureau, Emergency Fleet Corporation, "that the statement that the majority of small houses built in America today are ugly houses or houses without architectural merit, would be taken as a slam at all of those engaged in the building of these houses and likewise as a reflection upon all of us, yet I make the assertion without any hesitation.

"Now the reason for this is that everyone has been trying to do something 'different' from his neighbor, and he has given more thought to how he could accomplish this than he has to the idea that it was of importance to obtain a really good design for himself. So it is that you

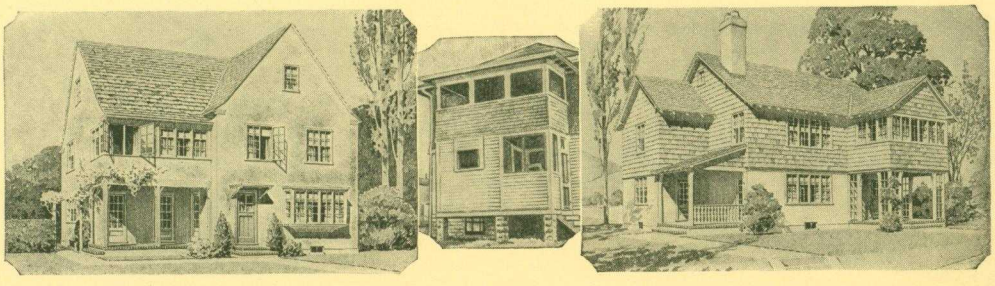


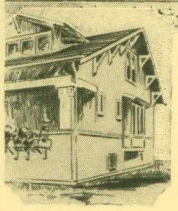
Economy in the use of materials is one of the essentials of good design. But how often it is violated, especially in the matter of porches! Aren't the slender, graceful posts extending clear to the floor, which are seen above, more pleasing than the stubby, massive columns resting on masonry bases as seen on the right?



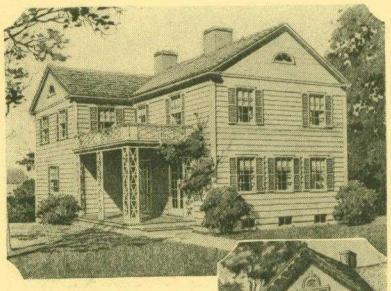
The dormer on the left is quite typical of many modern houses. Note, in contrast, the splendid proportions of the dormers above, their neat cornices and the narrow width between the sash and the sides of the dormers.

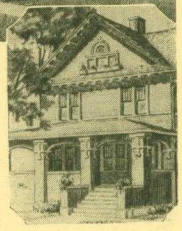
If you must have a sleeping porch, don't stick it on the back of your house just any way. It can be incorporated into the design of the house itself and given architectural character as suggested by the treatment shown in the English house at the extreme left and the Western design on the right.





The use of brackets which support nothing on the gable ends under the roof, is an expensive luxury and one that spoils the beauty of a simple roof. Note, too, the manner in which the dormer above blends with the house.





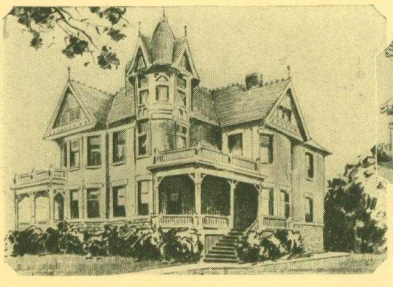
All the ornamentation in the world cannot make a house of good design. There is no need for the corbel blocks on the gable to the right, so why use them? They cost money, and isn't the plain gable above far more pleasing?

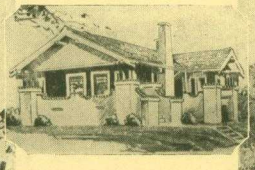
A few homes like the one below still endure — monuments of an age of extravagance in both materials and taste. They appear incongruous in comparison with houses whose beauty lies in their lines rather than in lavishness. In the small picture below and the one to the right are two bungalows. One is typical of the type of house being built today; the other is a house of good proportions, simple treatment and—economy. Which would you rather own?

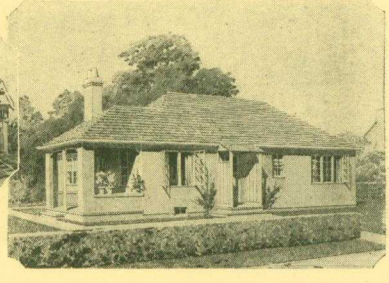
find houses of all sorts and colors and all periods of architecture, and each house containing as many projections as it was possible to stick on to it. Of course, the result is chaotic.

"I doubt if in the whole history of architecture you can find all bundled together as many ridiculous forms and arrangements as are to be noted in the architecture built in America since 1860. For example, there was the period of jigsaw ornaments, brackets and all sorts of contraptions. There was also an imitation of Colonial in which the purpose seemed to be to crowd in as many features as possible, instead of keeping the houses simple as were the Colonial. Then came the bungalow and the 'modern American' in which, if one judges from the sizes of members and elements of detail, the purpose was to use up our entire wood supply as soon as possible.

"I am not advocating that we should copy Colonial houses or work of foreign countries, but I insist that if we wish to create communities, that so far as their general character goes, are at all comparable with the earlier American work or the architecture of foreign countries, we must build simpler and much better designed houses. By simpler, I mean houses in which there is no waste of material, no mass of jigsaw ornament, no contraptions put on simply to make the house 'different.' For when you boil it down in final analysis, good design is very largely merely a use of materials in an economical way and under the direction of one who knows what is good pro-



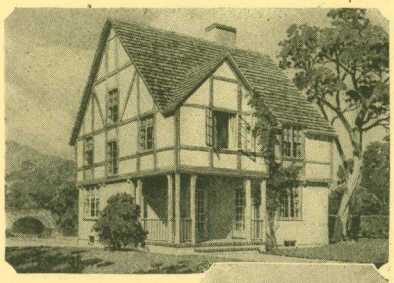




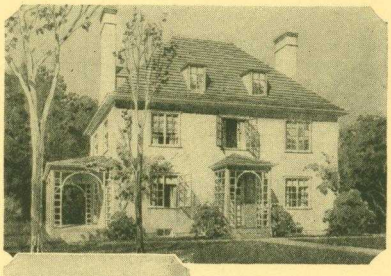
portion. Recently in America, any number of people have come to think that economy, or, as it is sometimes said, efficiency, is an end in itself. No more stupid idea ever obsessed a people. You may use a material ever so economically, but if you do not attach to it the know how of design, the result may be hideous. So far as the use of materials is concerned, good proportion costs absolutely nothing."

The Curtis Companies have assumed the responsibility of rendering a service to the home-builders of America, which brings beautiful homes within the reach of all. During the Great War, which focused attention upon the value of and need for beautiful homes and which demonstrated the wisdom of a course long advocated by the Curtis Companies—standardization, Trowbridge & Ackerman were retained to work out a large number of plans and houses, and to design a complete line of Curtis woodwork of architectural character.

These houses have been developed in four architectural expressions, as has also the woodwork, which has been standardized and is produced in quantities, with a resulting saving to the homebuilder. A study of these four architectural expressions is well worth while. Whether you build a Colonial, English, Southern or Western house, you will enjoy it much more if you know a little more about it; and you will find that the more you know about good design, the more pleasure your well designed home will give you. The center of your world deserves all the beauty you can give it.

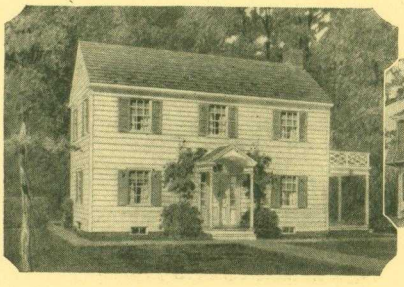


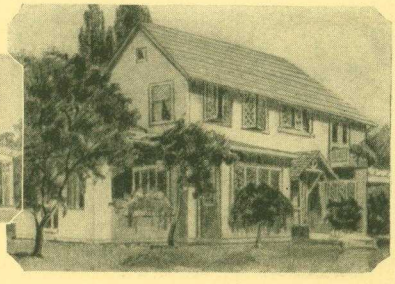
Careful window spacing is an important element of good design. The house at the right is typical of many that we see today. It is restless, ill-balanced and tiresome. How much more reposeful are the well spaced openings above!

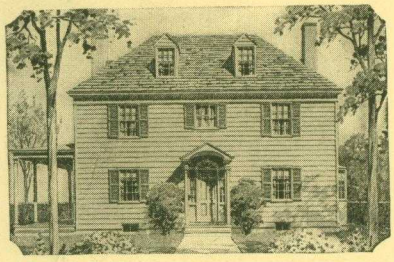


A study in windows. Sash with small panes of glass are interesting and inviting and they prevent the windows from appearing as gaping, black holes in the walls when the division bars are painted white.

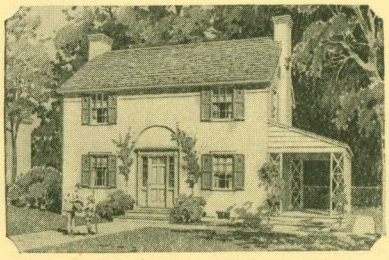
The publishers of plan books have sensed a demand from the public for houses of good design such as the Colonial, but have not known how to supply it. Compare the two pseudo-Colonial houses below with the authoritative design at the extreme left. Which house shows better proportions, better symmetry, greater simplicity and genuine beauty? It is apparent, too, that the well designed house is easier and less expensive to build.



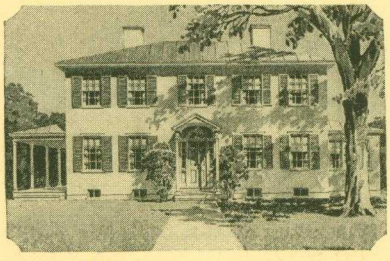




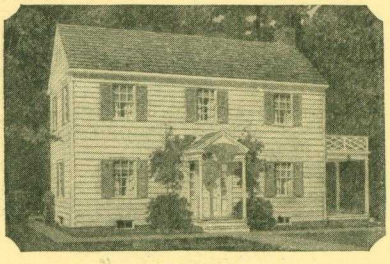
Devonshire C-807. Simplicity in the composition of its walls and roof is the keynote to the Colonial home.



Bradley C-530. Even in the small Colonial home there is a quiet dignity, never a striving for effect.



Erlton C-816. The Colonial house is symmetrical in its window spacing, roof forms and exterior details.



Fenway C-702. The plan of the Colonial home is usually rectangular; it sometimes is L-shaped, too.

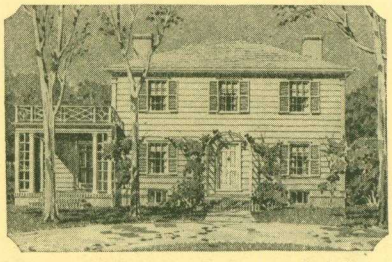
The Spirit of the Colonial Home

THE Colonial home breathes of human associations, of family ties, of fireside happiness. It possesses the spirit of the hearth. It is a home of beauty—and there can be no rest without beauty. Colonial architecture is an American interpretation of what is known in England as Georgian architecture. It is generally recognized as the one distinctive American architectural expression.

The characteristics of the Colonial house are, above all, simplicity, symmetry and quiet dignity, and generally its plan is regular and in the form of a rectangle; consequently it is an economical house to build.

Among the principal features of the Colonial house is the simple roof, with its relatively narrow cornice made up of well-formed moldings. The dormers are always small and few in number. There is a certain primness about the Colonial house which results from its nicely spaced windows, its well studied details, and the ever-important consideration that it apparently never strives for effect. It is a straight-forward solution of an architectural problem.

The architectural details—doors, windows and woodwork—of the Colonial home contribute much to its entrancing beauty. Because of their subtle appeal to the eye these things



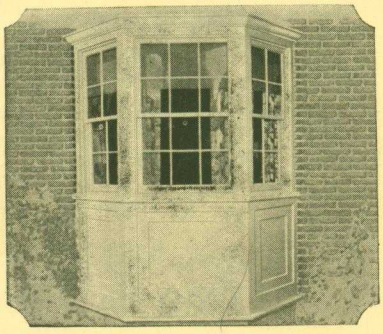
Chesterfield C-917. The lean-to on the Colonial farm house adds much to its interest and exterior beauty.

must be seen to be appreciated. The longer you study the Colonial designs illustrated in the Curtis Catalog No. 400, which you can see at your dealer's, the more you will admire their truthful, delicate, simple, dignified character.

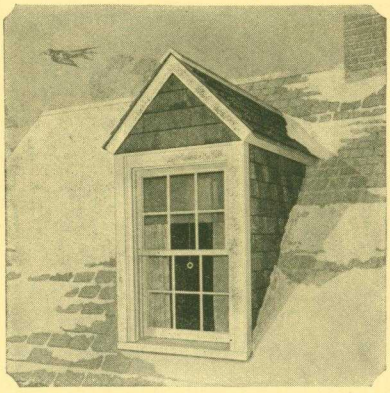
The doorway is always the focal center of the Colonial home. It is the most important element of the facade. Shutters are used on the windows and are invariably painted to contrast with the house. The windows are usually divided into a large number of small panes. On the inside, the principal architectural feature of the Colonial house, if it be of two stories, is a stately stairway with slender balusters and newel exquisitely formed. Corner cupboards and china closets are used in the dining room, and there is nearly always a fireplace or two, with a simple mantel design usually of wood.

The Colonial house properly is a white one, both inside and out. If you want to stick closely to tradition, you can have reds and yellows also. Many of the Colonial designs shown in the catalog are illustrated in white because they should in the main be so painted in your home.

Have you ever seen any of those quaint old Colonial homes "down East?" If you have, you can easily appreciate the spirit of the Colonial home. The service that the Curtis Catalog, the portfolio of Better Built Homes and your lumber dealer offer you will enable

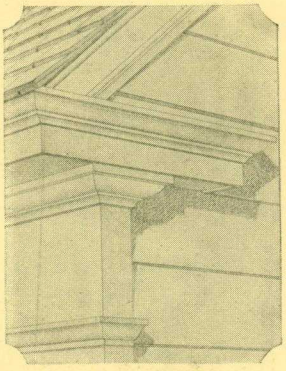


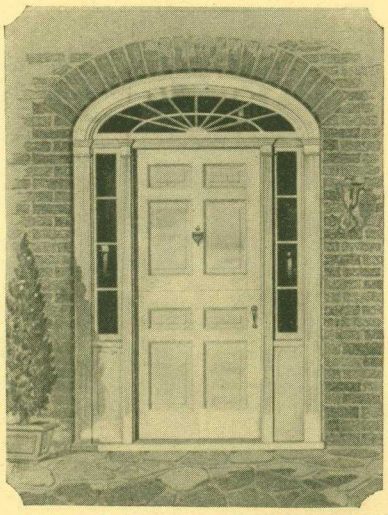
C-1114. The small panes in the windows are particularly attractive in the Colonial bay.



C-1122. The dormers on the Colonial house are always small, few in number, excellently proportioned.

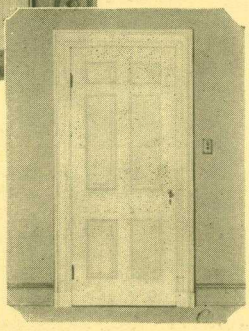
Colonial roofs end in a relatively narrow cornice made up of well-formed moldings.



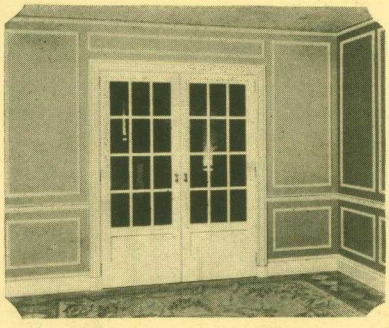


C-101. The entrance is the focal center of the Colonial home and the most important element of the facade.

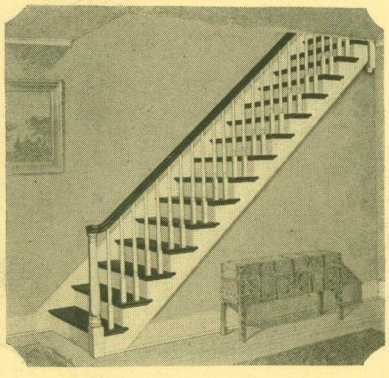
C - 700 We owe the delightful tradition of built-in corner china closets to Colonial architecture.



C - 302 The Colonial interior door and its finely molded trim (C-1600) form the background for beautiful interior furnishings and pleasing color schemes.



C-642. The Colonial house admits of white paneled wainscoting or "French" paneling.

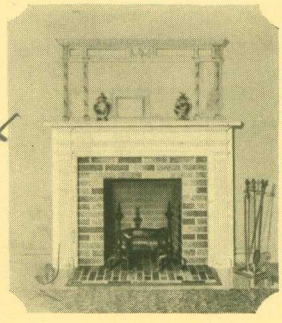


C-907. An exquisitely formed newel, often with a volute, and slender balusters are seen in the Colonial stair.

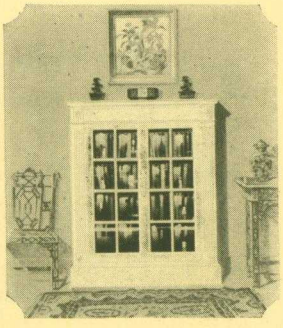
you to build such a home, one that your great-great-grandchildren will prize and revere as deeply a century hence as we today admire Mount Vernon, Monticello, or the White House —because of the genuine beauty of its design.

The American Colonists, to whom we owe the Colonial home, were strongly influenced by the traditions of the old world, when they built their houses. They recognized one important difference, however, between the old world Georgian and what they themselves developed. While the English built of stone, the Colonists built of wood. That accounts for the delightful delicacy and grace of Colonial details—the narrow dormers, twelve-light windows, carefully molded cornices, slender columns, and simple doorways on the outside; and the slender balusters and newels, small moldings and fine forms of permanent furniture on the inside. Delicacy is the outstanding characteristic of Colonial work, and without this delicacy it is seldom good Colonial. The roofs had very small projections, and on the gables frequently was nothing more than a single board and perhaps a molding under the shingles. This point particularly is to be observed in practically every old house of the Colonial period, yet no one characteristic is so often ignored in modern attempts at the Colonial and with such unfortunate results.

Because of its rectangular plan and lack of expensive gew-gaws, the Colonial house can be built inexpensively of any material.



C-617. The Colonial home possesses the spirit of the hearth.



C-575. The simplicity of Colonial details is shown in this bookcase.

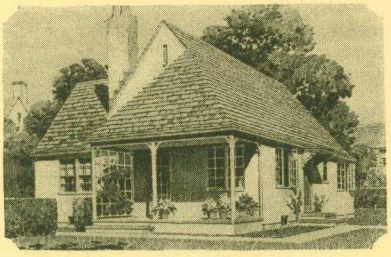
The Charm of the English Dwelling

THERE is no pretense about the English house. Its charm lies in its informality, its simplicity. It is built for comfort, not for show. It looks like a home and is homelike even when empty. The Englishman builds his best for his family. Isn't it natural, then, that we Americans, who love our own homes and in whose lives home influences count for so much, should make use of the most domestic of domestic architecture that we can find?

You can easily tell the English house by its low and rambling mass, its steep roof and its tall chimney. It is substantial rather than dignified; its lines are severely straight and flattened, except at the spring, which is slightly curved. The informality of the English cottage is due to the freedom in the design of the roof forms and in the spacing and location of windows. The openings are placed where they are particularly needed from the inside, without ignoring spacing and proportions on the exterior. Balance and good proportion are maintained always, but there is no rigid enforcement of symmetry. The majority of English houses are of plaster, or stucco. They can, however, be built of any native material such as wood, stone, or brick. Half timbers are often employed with pleasing effect.

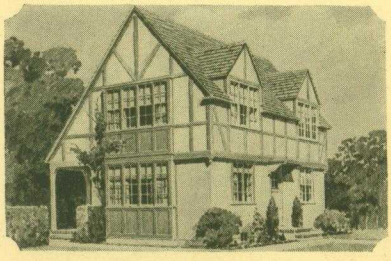
The doorway to the English house is interesting because of its unassuming character.

Murat C-808. Interesting bays and dormers and a slight overhang of the second floor are English features.

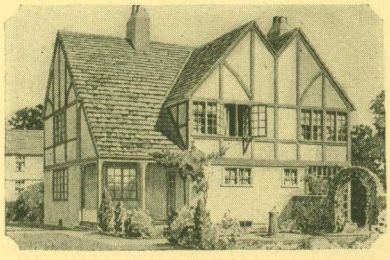


Lesmay C-501. Casement sash and tall chimney with chimney pots identify the English house.

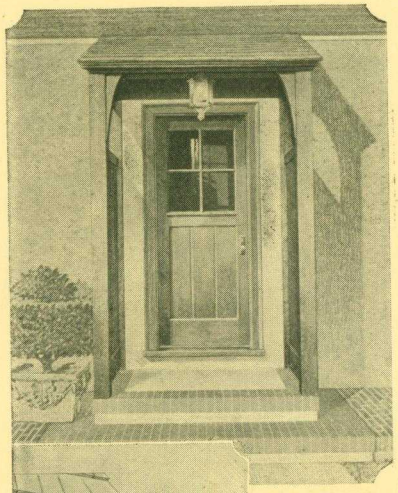
Millsboro C-918. Balance and proportion are found in the English house, but no rigid symmetry.



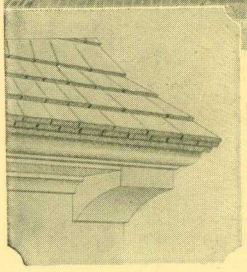
Marlboro C-528. Half-timbers are often employed with pleasing effect in the English house, which is usually of masonry construction.



Marlan C-732. Freedom in the design of the roof and the spacing and location of windows is characteristically English.



C - 111. The doorway to the English house is interesting because of its unassuming character.

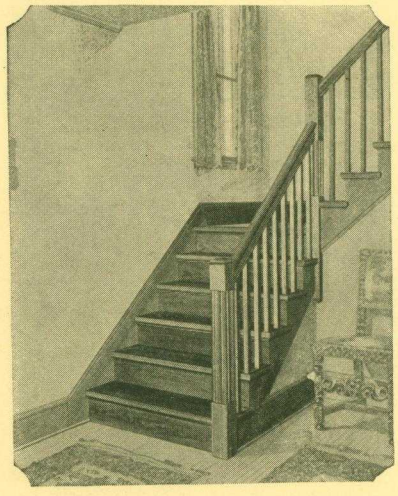


The edges of the roof do not widely overhang at the ends or eaves of the English house, and there is a slight curve at the spring.

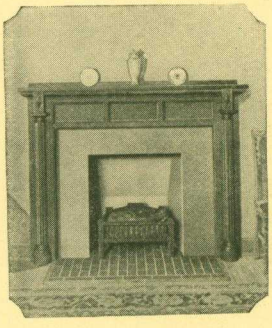
It is protected by a hood or shelter when there is no porch. The English roof is steep, in order that it may shed heavy rains and snows. The edges of the roof do not widely overlap the ends or eaves of the house. The window areas are large and the sash usually exhibit divided lights. Casements, arranged in pairs or in groups of greater number, and affording a generous amount of light and air for the interior, are characteristic of this type of dwelling. Double-hung windows can also be used in good taste and are usually supplemented by blinds. The porch is frequently under the main roof of the house. The English house can often be identified by the chimney pots alone. The chimneys are placed wherever inside uses demand, with results that challenge admiration in many cases.

Wall paneling is a product of the English house, having come down from Tudor days, and to it the English interior owes much of its warm, homelike appearance. English woodwork, which is used abundantly, presents rather heavy lines, but its proportions are nicely studied and the surfaces are finely molded. The mantel is simple and is usually of wood, a material that is always associated with fireside warmth.

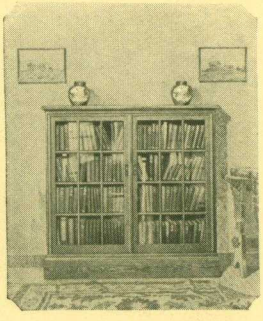
On the outside, the wooden parts of the house are stained. Brown or green are the accepted



C-913. English woodwork, as typified by this stair, presents rather heavy lines carefully molded.



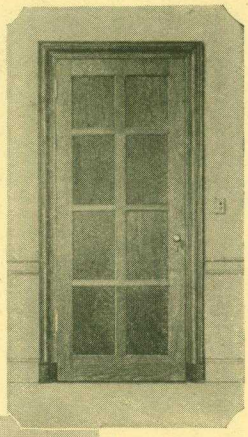
C-620. The English mantel is nearly always wood, stained or natural.



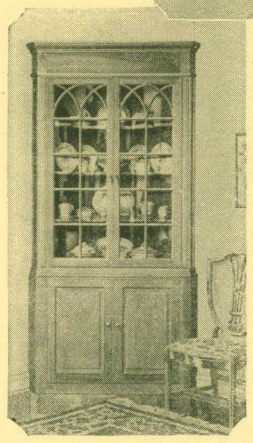
C-583. Permanent furniture makes the English house homelike

colors. The interior woodwork is waxed. Most of the English designs of Curtis woodwork are produced in oak, a very durable and serviceable wood and one of beautiful grain. An eye that is sensible to simplicity and perfect proportion will enjoy the treat that English woodwork always gives.

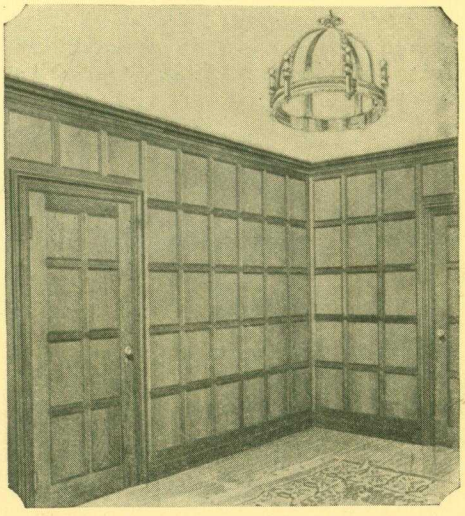
In the English houses designed by Trowbridge & Ackerman for the Curtis Companies, the problem has been one of adapting an architectural type developed centuries ago to typical plans of modern American homes. The old English house, for example, did not have a porch, yet this very essential feature to modern home life has been incorporated with remarkable success. On the inside, a certain degree of privacy for every room has been attained without complete isolation of the rooms or the use of long, dark halls, which are often found in old English houses. The result is, of course, a house of unusual charm, and one of which we shall never tire, for this type of architecture has already stood the test of time.



C - 305. The beauty of English woodwork, which is used abundantly in the English home, is shown to best advantage in the interior doors.

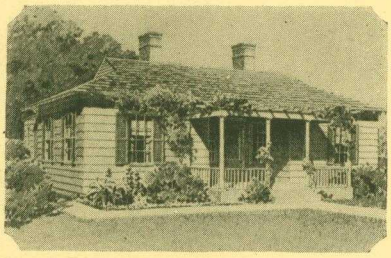


C - 702. Built-in china closets give a reposeful quality to the dining room that is quite in keeping with the spirit of the English house.

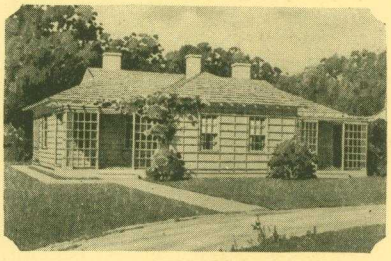


C-643. Wall paneling originated in the English house, having come down from Tudor days. Note the pleasing proportions.

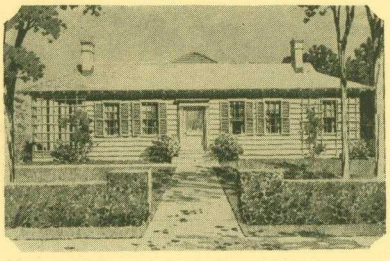
C-712. This impressive English sideboard shows nicely studied proportions and finely molded surfaces.



Valens C-513. The Southern house makes a good summer cottage. A louver gable keeps its rooms cool.



Wamega C-607. The Southern house sets close to the ground, which, with its horizontal lines, gives it a pleasing appearance.



Yarnell C-603. Large openings and high ceilings insure a free circulation of air throughout the interior

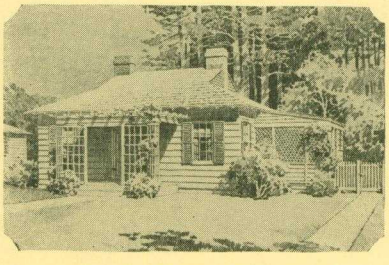
The Southern House—A Home of Sunshine and Air

ARE there sunny skies and warm winds where you intend to build your permanent home? Would you like a suitable house for a cozy summer cottage? If so, you should learn to know the Southern house, for it is designed especially for a warm climate or for summer use.

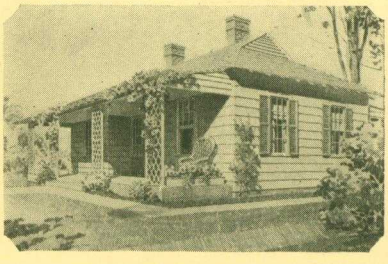
It has but one story and there is no basement, because there is no need for a furnace. A small storage room on the first floor for fuel costs less than a full cellar, and there are fireplaces in the Southern house which give it adequate heat. Who doesn't enjoy the warm glow of a hearth fire?

Excavate for a basement under the Southern house, install a heating system in it, and you have as charming and comfortable a dwelling as any family in any latitude could wish. So, if you particularly admire some Southern design, you can build it no matter in what climate you may live, by making provision in its construction for protection against cold.

The Southern house is characterized by large windows and doorways—openings that allow a free circulation of air at all times. In order to keep out the hot sun, the windows are equipped with shutters. Broad eaves help to keep the walls cool in the daytime. The house has large open porches. Sometimes there is only a veranda, with an open raftered roof.



Woodbine C-407. A storage and fuel room on the ground floor costs less than a full cellar,



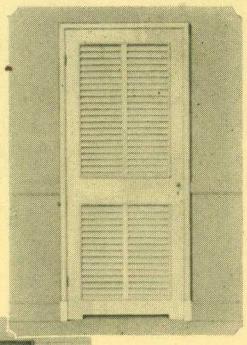
Valcour C-514. The large, open, trellis-screened porch makes an outdoor living room.

A curious and attractive feature of the Southern house is one often seen in Chinese and Japanese architecture. This is the combination gable and hip roof. It produces a quaint effect, and at the same time permits a well-ventilated attic through the louvres in the small gables. The main lines of the roof of the Southern house itself are horizontal ones. The house does not aspire to touch the sky; its ambition is merely to remain on Mother Earth and be a cozy home for its master and his family.

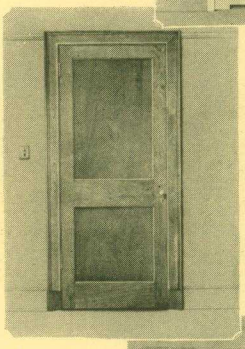
The woodwork of the Southern home is Colonial in many respects. It shows the same delightful proportions, symmetry and dignity. The large windows have divided lights. The doors, built-in furniture, mantel and trim follow the Colonial motif largely but are somewhat simplified in design.

The Southern house can be painted white with the blinds, frames and exterior trim painted green or brown. On the inside, the woodwork can be stained or waxed or painted white, according to the wood used and the individual preference.

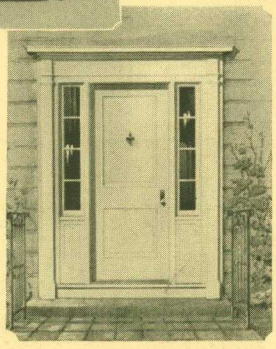
This house should be the home of an optimist. It suggests sunny dispositions and a love of fresh air and the outdoors. It makes an ideal summer cottage. It is always a house of ease and comfort, of hospitality and light hearts.



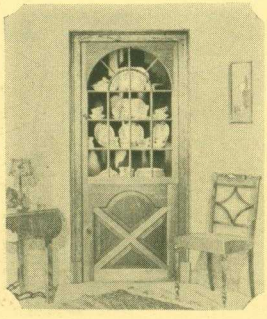
C - 330. A slat door for the bedrooms lets in the breezes at night, but shuts out intruders and gives privacy to the chambers.



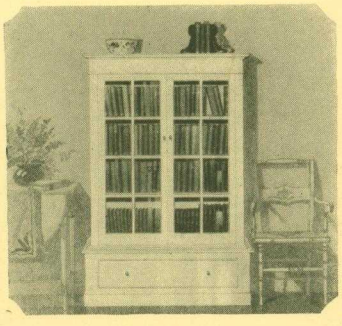
C - 304. The doors and other woodwork in the Southern home can be stained, varnished or finished natural, or painted, just as you prefer.



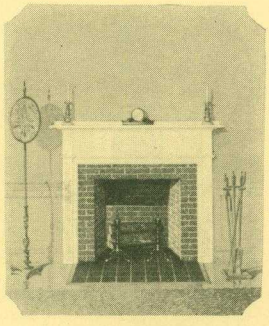
C - 103. The entrance to the Southern house follows the Colonial motif but is somewhat simplified in design.



C-588. Southern woodwork is Colonial in many respects.

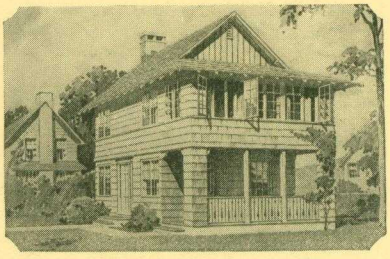


C-703. Permanent furniture is an architectural part of the house.

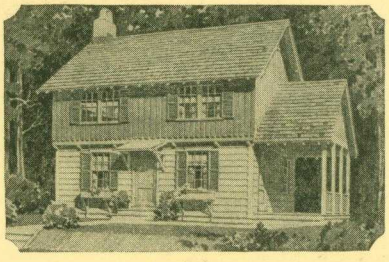


C-615. Fireplaces, with well designed mantels, beautify the interior.

Sandale C-450. In the Western house its second story sometimes overhangs the first, giving the effect of a chalet.



Ruxton C-454. The porch, sun parlor or sleeping porch, is an integral part of the Western house.



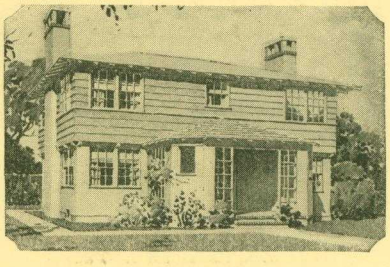
Tanglewood C-449. Clapboards are proper for the Western home, but any other material can be used.

The Western House—A Native Architecture

THIS expression is not confined in its adaptability to any geographical part of the country. In its very structure it blends its lines with Nature's strata or her forest spires, and it brings to the city street a touch of the wildwood and to the rural highway—home. It is a house for a hardy people, for it invites one into the open.

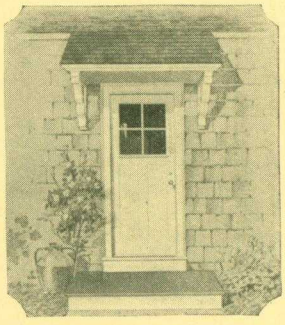
It is easy to understand the Western house. It is a house of straight lines almost entirely. The roof is sometimes steep and sometimes very flat. It usually ends in an open cornice, with rafter ends exposed, and widely overhanging at both the eaves and the gables. If you want a sun parlor, sleeping porch or both, or a large open porch and bay windows, you can find a Western house that has such features.

Clapboards or shingles, used singly or in combination, are proper materials for the Western home. Charming effects are produced when the clapboards run vertically in the gables and perhaps are sawed to shape at the lower ends. Sometimes the Western house is built of stone or stucco, and in these materials it is also very attractive. The entire second floor in the two-story house may project a little over the first story, producing the effect of the chalet. But ever and always are good proportion and balance maintained.



Ramona C-718. A well proportioned roof with wide, open cornice is a feature of the Western house.

C-1125. Dormers and bay windows add interest to the Western house.



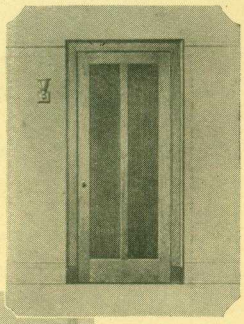
C-112. The Western entrance is inviting because of its simple design.

A frank plainness is evident in the details of the Western house. In studying these details, it must be remembered that they are in wood, and are essentially small in character. They give opportunity for that warm, homelike material to express its inherent beauty, especially in interior details.

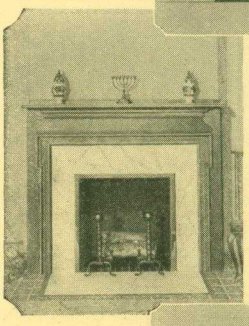
The porch posts are entirely unornamented. Sawed balusters of simple geometrical forms are frequently used with striking effects. The doors are extremely plain, possessing both horizontal and vertical lines in about equal number but with parts splendidly proportioned. Dormers and bay windows add interest to both the exterior and the interior. Shutters are desirable, though they are not essential to the design.

The fireplace is almost as essential a part of the Western house as it was of the log cabin. There is a generous use of woodwork on the interior of the home. The type calls for cozy seats, bookcases, built-in furniture and many similar architectural features. When these are stained or finished natural, the result is a house of unusually homelike appeal.

You will find the Western house happily expressive of the trend of the present movement in home-building and far in advance of anything of similar nature likely to be produced for some time to come.

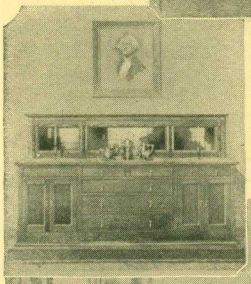


C-306. Western doors are pleasingly plain, and their parts are splendidly proportioned.

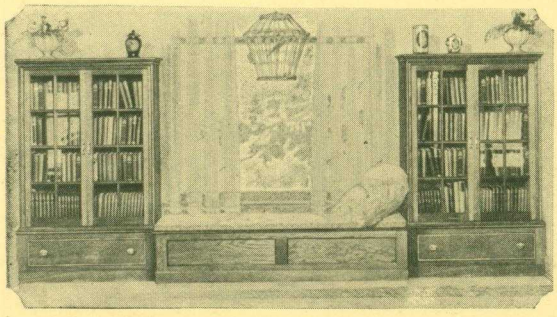


C-619. The fireplace is almost as essential a part of the Western house as it was of the log cabin. A well-composed mantel usually frames it.

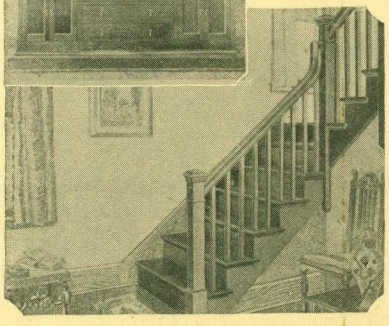
C-711. While utility is by no means overlooked, permanent furniture in the Western home possesses unusual beauty.



C-717. Permanent furniture is abundantly used in the Western interior.



C-594. The Western type calls for cozy seats, bookcases and permanent furniture, which are subject to various finishing treatments, according to the wood used.



C-911. Finer and better proportioned parts distinguish the Western stair from the stairs in many houses.

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